

LUCHA LIBRE WEEKLY

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A REVIEW: THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1992 IN MEXICAN LUCHA LIBRE

One of the pleasures in doing one's one newsletter is the chance to sit back, make observations and/or analysis, and look authoritative. One of the responsibilities is not to use the forum to pass off personal likes and opinions as the gospel when nothing could be further from the truth. I have done quite a bit of research into professional wrestling in Mexico City insofar as real names, legit backgrounds, titles held, and roles played in the past. That does not make me an expert on lucha libre in my mind. I suppose the most representative saying would be that I know just enough to be dangerous. I suppose that I do have an awful lot of background facts down. I have been watching professional wrestling since 1964. In speaking with fans, wrestlers, announcers, newsletter editors, etc., I have pieced together a fairly solid idea of how a wrestling business is run. That does not mean I have the be-all and end-all knowledge of how to improve a wrestling promotion. No person has the one right idea how to run a promotion; there is no one such idea. Still I, like many long-time fans, can spot errors and can recognize successes and the reasons behind them. And so we come to the point. I figured the end of March being the end of the first quarter that I would try to summarize and analyze what has gone on in the world of lucha libre. However, I must be careful to label reasoned analysis as such and label personal opinion likewise. The facts, such as results, dates, and personnel moves, will be obvious as facts and not as opinion. I have been waiting to do this issue since I started because I think have some interesting things to say. Whether you agree or not, I'd love to hear your response.

Now before another caveat, let me acknowledge the single biggest problem I or anyone has in developing such an analysis. We are all trying to follow Mexican lucha libre from afar. We get the big house show of the week from each promotion on television and we get weekly magazines and some daily newspaper coverage. But most of what I see, at least, information already analyzed once, by a reporter or an announcer, before I get it. Without direct contact from the participants and with only rare direct observation, I must be careful to filter; not to over-assume and jump too soon to a conclusion. Of this I have been guilty often in the past, though less frequently lately, I think.

So before I start, what of what follows will fall under the category of analysis and what will merely be valid speculation? Let me use an example. It is widely rumored that Jose "el Negro" Casas will be switching promotions, leaving the UWA and moving to the EMLL. The speculation of the possible jump has been reported in the mainstream press in the form of Japanese weekly magazines "Weekly Gong" and "Weekly Pro Wrestling" and labeled specifically as a rumor in "Super Luchas" magazine in Mexico. It has further been reported in the American newsletter "The Wrestling Observer Newsletter," in which I believe editor David Meltzer can attribute to at least one live source from within the business as well as to the above printed sources. Now, the fact that Casas is considering jumping promotions, which would be one of the year's biggest stories in Mexican wrestling if it happens, is, so best as I can determine, a fact. It is not speculation because it has been validated from different printed sources in different countries, all of whom in their own editorial rigor determined it worth acknowledging as a rumor and printing it as such. Still, no source has yet gone on record as interviewing Casas, asking him this question specifically, and printing his affirmative response (I personally have little doubt if any reporter did ask him such questions, the only response would be a no comment). When I comment, as I did in the last issue, that Xochitl Hamada's working for the EMLL is an indication that Casas's jump is even more likely, *that* is speculation. I believe it is valid speculation, however, and suitable for printing, because of the background information I have on that statement. First, I know that Casas's switch has been widely foretold for several months by what for this business is an extremely wide variety of extremely reputable sources. Second, I have been told privately, via a second-hand source who has proved to be quite reliable, of Casas and Hamada being "boyfriend and girlfriend." Third, I personally spoke with Hamada after a card at el Toreo in 1991, and based on her response and actions, I drew the conclusion that she and Casas were close and that they wish they could spend more time together. Fourth, I know that her father is a power within the offices of the UWA promotion that Casas now works for; I have been told this several times by reliable people. Fifth, I know that she, almost alone of the Mexican luchadoras, has not worked on an EMLL show in the past year (note: the UWA books virtually no womens' wrestling anymore; in my review of cards in Mexico City in 1992, I find just a couple of bookings for the women). Putting this together, knowing first-hand how close she is, or was as of late last year, to Casas, my seeing her starting to work for the EMLL started the wheels rolling in my head. It is why I came up with the conclusions that I did. It does not mean that I am right; it does, however, make good and logical sense to me when I put it all together in my head. And finally, any guesses I might make about likely feuds and/or programs for

Casas in the EMLL, no matter how "educated" the guess may be, are still just speculation. And now, on to the review.

In my "reasoned analysis," this has been a very good year in the ring for the EMLL. They have managed to successfully balance the promotional pushes and emphases in the main events in several ways: between heavier- and lighter-weight wrestlers; between older names and newer stars; and between continuing to heat up old feuds and beginning (and ending) new feuds. Probably the best example of this in early 1992 has been the increased push of la Bestia Salvaje. Up until mid-1991, Salvaje had been an opening-match to mid-card performer (at best) for several years, even though he had a world of talent. Sensing his talent, Yoshihiro Asai invited Salvaje to accompany him to Japan for the June 1991 Universal tour, and the two had a feud during that tour. In fact, the two worked five matches as opponents (some singles, some tags) and Salvaje won all five! After that, Salvaje was given an increasingly more prominent position in the EMLL. He teamed with then National Parejas Champions los Destruyores (Tony Arce and el Vulcano) in several trios matches at la Arena Mexico. Salvaje got over so well that he was given in early 1992 a small feud with Juan "el Huracan" Sevilla, another wrestler who worked primarily opening- and mid-card matches. Due to the hard work of the wrestlers, a slow six-week build-up, and a slight twist in that build-up (Sevilla won almost all the falls) the fans really responded to the feud and to Salvaje. Salvaje won the blow-off in a hair match. To show how much careful (read: slow and consistent) promotion can be, Salvaje's feud with Sevilla had tons of heat, while his one-week feud with the much bigger name wrestler Kato Kung Lee had virtually no heat (personal opinion: their "feud" was too rushed). In early 1992, the EMLL has been focusing also on the promotion of its CMLL championships. I feel they have promoted this smartly (analysis) in two ways: first, they have spread out the championship tournaments to different arenas in different cities so that each of their main cities and arenas gets at least one tournament. This keeps the fans all over happy and keeps the local promoters and arena managers happy. Second, the EMLL has spaced out the timing of its championships well enough so that they happen, are over in three weeks, there's a little time off, and then the next one happens. Plus, there have been good sound promotional reasons for the booking of each tournament, the pairings of the wrestlers in the finals, and the winners.

In fact, the EMLL has promoted championships matches in its various divisions regularly in 1992. Since the year began, several new champions have been crowned: Fuerza Guerrera won the CMLL World Welterweight Championship tournament, then lost the title to America. La Mascarita Sagrada won the CMLL World Super-Mini-Estrellas tournament. Pierroth junior has just taken the CMLL World Light Heavyweight belt from Jerry Estrada, and his trio team los Intocables del Ring have just won the CMLL World Trios titles. And, el Misterioso and el Volador won the Mexican National Parejas championships from los Destruyores. And the next few months looks like fertile grounds for EMLL promotions, as new CMLL championships tournaments will be held in the Womens', Parejas, and Lightweight classes. This, plus a lode of title unification and challenge matches (such as Asai versus Lizmark for the NWA Light Heavyweight belt), plus an infusion of hot new talent, bodes well for the EMLL in the near future. Insofar as the new talent goes, I expect Black Terry, Jose Luis Feliciano, Shu, el Guerrero, Jose "el Negro" Casas, Ruben Garcia (ex-el Huracan Ramirez junior), and los Tinieblas to join the EMLL permanently by the end of 1992, and I expect el Hijo del Santo to work many dates for the promotion in the latter half of the year.

An EMLL review would not be complete, however, without a look at the television product. Head television producer and co-promoter Antonio Pena has found a stable (analysis) and successful (opinion) formula for his television show. The main event always features a heavy feud, whether it is a set-up or a blow-off/stipulation match. The match is always built upon clearly and carefully in a match the week before. The tercera, or third match of the card, highlights the secondary feud that Pena wants to get over, and the feud is always heated up, either to continue next week or to head to the blow-off. Therefore, the semifinal is normally worked as a comedy match or at least as a relatively unimportant match; here you will normally find Nitron, Salomon Grundy, and/or Aaron Grundy. This gives the fans in the arenas and at home a "break" in the intensity level, does not overshadow the main feud points, and gives the wrestlers involved a chance to polish their characters for the fans. The openers will generally feature the ladies, midgets, or newest wrestling characters that Pena wants to introduce.

On the other side of the fence, the UWA's television show has been hurt by the same blunders in the ring that has so deleteriously affected their attendance recently. Just 18 months ago, the UWA was a strong number one promotion in Mexico; now it is a fading number two. The reasons why, as I see it, remain the same as in the analysis I did that was printed in the "Observer" in September 1991; the promotion has made amazingly few alterations in its strategy despite attendance figures that are down 50% to 66% from 18 months ago. To briefly summarize, here are the problems that I see. First, the finishes of far too many matches are screw-job- or non-finishes; as I noted in last week's issue, virtually every TV match and el Toreo match I reviewed that week ended in a DQ or draw or some finish that would turn off the fans. Second, the same old names are at the top as were there 10 years ago (Canek, Dos Caras, los Villanos, Mil Mascaras, Enrique Vera, etc.). Even though Canek and Mascaras are undeniable draws, like Ric Flair or The Road Warriors at the end of their NWA stay in the US, they are drawing a deep passionate response from a few fans, and are drawing no casual fans, who have seen it all before. Canek's script (the face who

runs out of town the foreigners but the heel against other Mexicans) has gotten tired beyond belief. Third, the titles are traded amongst the same veterans. Each UWA star who won a World Title this year, except The Black Power II's winning the Trios belt, went to a former World Champion. The UWA did try a couple of new things. One was to bring in new foreigners (such as Bull Pain, Danny Kroffat, Doug Furnas, Tony Anthony, and Danny Davis) and this trend is positive. The second was to give more singles championship matches at el Toreo to help build up attendance at its major weekly Sunday shows. However, since 2 of the first 3 such title matches (Casas/Santo and Killer/Vera) ended in screwy finishes, the end result negated any positive impact. These reasons, when combined, help explain why audiences are down up to 2/3 or even more at UWA shows. *(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK)*

EMLL NEWS

The biggest news, if it is true, occurred outside of the ring. In an interview published in this week's "USA EL ARMA" weekly hispanic magazine, luchador Konnan el Barbaro (Carlos Santiago Espada Moises) announced his retirement from wrestling. The stated reason of Konnan's retirement was so that he could "continue his acting and singing career." I will pause for dramatic effect here. Now, I do not know if this is legitimate or not. Maybe it is. Konnan has a small semi-recurring role in an hispanic soap opera ("telenovela") called "El Abuelo y Yo," which is televised on Televisa, channel 2 in Mexico City, at 5:00 pm every weekday afternoon. The singing part I can't verify, though Konnan has gotten a lot of press in the weekly lucha libre magazines for his "Mexican Rap dancing." However, I suppose it is equally as likely that this story is just a story to explain his absence from the wrestling rings if Konnan goes to work for the WWF after Wrestlemania VIII as "Latin Fury" or "Gundam" or whatever his ring name/personality will be. Time will tell, if Dave Meltzer doesn't tell first. Konnan was interviewed directly for this magazine article; the words stating his retirement are his own, in direct quotes, and not the writer's summation. The interview was conducted in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, the weekend of the CMLL first annual convention which was held March 15. By the way, this is the same magazine that "broke" the story, later reprinted in the weekly lucha libre magazines, that Konnan el Barabro and ex-lucha-libre-queen Vicky Palacios were breaking off their engagement. Other than the television taping reviewed below, the biggest match of the week saw Pierroth junior win the CMLL World Light Heavyweight Championship from Jerry Estrada in a match held Thursday, March 19, 1992, at la Arena Isabel in Pierroth junior's home town of Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico. So Pierroth had a big four days, winning ~~the~~ world titles in *four* days: the CMLL Light Heavyweight title the 19th and the trios titles the 22nd. The biggest card of the week happened Thursday, March 26, 1992, at the same Arena Isabel in Cuernavaca. There, Octagon defended his Mexican National Middleweight Championship versus the challenge of la Bestia Salvaje. Salvaje has won some heavy stipulation matches so far this year but I'll bet he didn't win this one. My guess is Fuerza Guerrera will win this title soon and in order to save face Octagon will challenge Guerrera back for a mascara contra mascara match. (That's just speculation, by the way).

EMLL TELEVISION RUNDOWN

Here are the results from the show broadcast on Galavision 3/29/92, and taped 3/20/92 at la Arena Mexico:

* After the introduction, the inicial of the evening was shown. Los Metalicos (Bronce, Plata, and captain Oro) defeated el Felino (Baby Casas), el Comando Ruso, and captain Ponzona in three falls in a total elapsed time of 14:56. Bronce pinned Ponzona with a quebrada (moonsault bodyblock) in the 1st; Ruso pinned Oro with a great "Kyoko power bomb" in the 2nd; and los Metalicos won via count out in the 3rd when all the Metalicos did big dives to end the fall. Oro's dive, a quebrada off the top rope inside the ring, and Bronce's, a quebrada off the second rope outside the ring, were awesome. Bronce's dive landed on the seat of #1 lucha libre fan Virginia "Vicky" Aguilera but she had been conveniently moved right before the dives. This was a fine opener but nothing great; Oro and Ruso looked the best. ** 1/4.

* The segunda match didn't air; we went right to the tercera, where The Love Machine (Art Barr), captaining a team of himself, el Hijo de Lizmark and el Hijo del Solitario, defeated the team of la Fiera, Jerry "el Puma" Estrada, and captain The Blue Panther in two straight falls in 12:45. Panther was pinned in both falls—in the 1st by a jumping senton by Solitario and in the 2nd by an inside cradle by Machine. Machine and Panther ripped at each other's masks and clearly are setting up a mask match for *very* soon. They did an interview right before the match in the parking lot where Barr said to Panther "Come on you son of a bitch," and Barr repeated that to Panther during the match. There was a lot of fan heat for this match and they highlighted the feud properly, but the match itself was only okay. Solitario looks slightly (but only slightly) improved and Lizmark looked okay but not great. ** 3/4.

* The cartometro popularity poll was next, with Casanova el Vampiro Canadiense, Cien Caras, Lady Apache, la Mascarita Sagrada, and los Nuevos Infernales ranked number one in their classes.

* The semifinal found los Mosqueteros del Diablo, los Brazos (el Brazo, el Brazo de Oro, and captain el Brazo de Plata) go to a draw with Lizmark, el Rayo de Jalisco junior, and captain Konnan el Barbaro in 15:58. Rayo pinned el Brazo to win the 1st in 7:56 with a superplex off the 2nd rope; Plata pinned Konnan with an off the top rope splash

in 3:54; and the double-count-out-of-the-ring finish came at 4:08 of the third fall when no wrestler made it back into the ring by the count of twenty seconds after each wrestler did a dive out of the ring between the second and third ropes, finished by el Brazo de Plata's dive which "crushed everybody." This match was played strictly for comedy and relief since it was placed in the show between two main-even-feud matches. It served its purpose fine although looking back it seems they were kinda just going through the motions. ** 1/2

* The main event, in a singles' match with no other stipulations, saw Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, seconded by Konnan el Barbaro, defeated Sangre CHicana, seconded by la Fiera, two falls to one in a total elapsed time of 18:35. It would take the rest of this page in small type to explain what they did in this match (watch Dave sum it up in one sentence) but suffice it to say that the point was that heel referee Javier "el Gato" Montini was so blatantly partial and so involved in aiding CHicana that he was thrown out of the match by the commission and co-promoter Antonio Pena. The story of the match was that Montini and Fiera would get involved so often that even I was frustrated watching it, because the standard rules of fair play and impartiality were being so completely abused. But it all made sense when Montini was ejected in the third fall and replaced by impartial referee Roberto "el Guero" Rangel. Naturally, as soon as a fair referee was in the ring, Aguayo pinned CHicana clean with a small package. Not an easy match to watch but by the time the whole story line had played out, it all made a lot of sense. This match had tons of heat and Aguayo got a huge pop when he won. Not much of a match at all but a hell of a main event. ***

In other EMLL news, here are some recent big match results. On March 10 at la Arena Coliseo, Javier "el Monarca" Cruz captained a team which defeated a team captained by Atlantis when Cruz made Atlantis submit in the third fall (this sets a Cruz challenge for Atlantis's NWA Middleweight Title). On March 11 at la Arena Apatlaco, Octagon won a mask versus hair match over la Bestia Negra I. Negra I tried to run away after the match and avoid the haircut, but promoter Raul Reyes (who must be nearing 60) caught him, punched him out, and cut his hair personally. On March 21 at la Pista Arena Revolucion, Ciclón Ramirez won a mask versus mask match with la Dahlia Negra (no details on who he turned out to be) and in the semifinal The Blue Panther defeated el Filoso to retain the CMLL World Middleweight Championship. Also on March 21, Casanova el Vampiro Canadiense defeated la Bestia Negra II (bad week for these guys) in a hair match at la Arena Xochimilco. Finally, here's what was on the TV taping card at la Arena Mexico on March 27 that will air April 5 on Galavisión: The main event had Perro Aguayo, Konnan el Barbaro, and Casanova el Vampiro Canadiense versus Sangre CHicana, la Fiera, and Cien Caras; the semifinal had Love Machine, Octagon, and Atlantis versus Blue Panther, Bestia Salvaje, and el Satanico (expect Panther and Machine to set up their mask match with this match and then have it 4/3); the tercera had los Brazos versus Último Dragon, el Dandy, and Salomón Grundy (what a team); the segunda had Black Magic, Hijo de Blue Demon, and Hijo del Solitario versus Ponzón, Universo Dos Mil, and Espectro junior; and the inicial had brothers el Felino and Canelo Casas versus el Audaz (if he's healthy) and el Guerrero Samurai II.

UWA NEWS: The cards this past week throughout Mexico City this past week have been headlined by the heel (rudo) team of Buffalo Allen, el Gigante Warrior, and Bull Pain versus babyface (tecnico) Mexicans. The Mexican team has generally consisted of Canek, Dos Caras, and one other star. For example, in Thursday's (26th) card at la Pista Arena Revolucion, the other star was el Villano III. Friday, at the TV taping in Netzahualcoyotl, the main event was a little different: Bull Pain and Warrior were joined by Rambo to face Caras, Vera, and Villano III. The semifinal for that taping, held the 27th which will air April 4th, has los Villanos I/IV/V versus los Nuevos Misioneros de la Muerte in a non-title match. The only other TV match had los Cowboys (Silver King and el Texano) versus el Indomito and el Engendro. They did already announce that the main event of next week's TV taping, to be held on the 3rd of April and broadcast on the 11th, The Pegasus Kid (Christopher Michael Benoit) will defend his WWF World Light Heavyweight Championship versus el Villano IV (Tomas Diaz). The only other match of note scheduled within the next week is el Signo defending his UWA World Light Heavyweight Championship versus el Villano V. The match has been signed, but a date and place have not yet been announced.

LATE NEWS: Here are the results from the el Toreo card held Sunday, March 29, 1992. The main event saw Enrique Vera, Tinieblas I, and el Hijo de Tinieblas (with Alushe) defeat Fishman, José "el Negro" Casas, and The Pegasus Kid when Kid accidentally dropkicked Fishman in the third fall, allowing Vera to pin Fishman. After the match, Kid was attacked by Casas and Fishman and turned face (first UWA turn in a long time). The semifinal saw The Head Hunters A and B and la Sombra Negra defeat el Hijo del Santo and los Villanos IV and V in three falls when Negra pinned Santo clean in the third fall. Negra wants a match for Santo's UWA Welterweight belt, but Santo wants a hair/mask match. The tercera was said to be the best match as los Misioneros (in a rare face role) beat Bull Pain, el Gigante Warrior, and The Killer when Killer fouled Signo in the third fall. El Fantasma and el Villano I beat el Engendro and Kahos I in the segunda, and the opener saw Katana and el Halcon 78 over el Falcon and el Ángel Mortal. I do not have the main event result from the EMLL show at la Arena Mexico 3/29, but the semifinal saw Cien Caras, Sangre CHicana, and el Satanico defeat Salomón Grundy, el Último Dragon, and Lizmark when Satanico pinned Lizmark in the third fall. Also, in the tercera, Apolo Dantes, Black Magic, and la Mascara Sagrada defeated Javier "el Monarca" Cruz, la Fiera, and la Bestia Salvaje in three falls when Dantes pinned Cruz in the third to set up

a hair versus hair match next Sunday. I also have the results from the Sunday card 3/29 at la Arena Coliseo: In the main event, Damian el Guerrero won a hair match over (Leon) Kirilenko. The semifinal saw Talisman junior retain his D. F. Welterweight title over Mario Prado junior. The tercera had el Faraon (who I thought had retired in 1990) teaming with Ringo and Cachorro Mendoza to defeat el Egipcio, Javier "el Gusano" Llanes, and el Guerrero Maya. El Guerrero Maya, working twice, also lost in the semifinal, teaming with el Guerrero-del Futuro and el Supremo I in losing to Popitekus (hi Pat), CHavo Guerrero, and Rokambola. The opener had Super Gallo, (Super) Atomo, and el Duro over Baby Richard, Climax, and el Canalla I. Finally, "Global Wrestling News" reports that in December, los Mercenarios Americanos lost the WWA World Trios Titles in Tijuana to Kiss, la Agula del America, and Ultraman Dos Mil. The main event of the 3/30 UWA card at la Arena Puebla has Dos Caras/Tinieblas vs. Head Hunters/Pegasus.

LUCHA LIBRE VIDEO TAPE NEWS: So many of you who have written me have asked how to acquire Mexican lucha libre tapes, tapes of luchadores in Japan, etc. I am not sure of the legality of all of this, but I figured I could at least list the videotapes I have available, some of which most of you probably do not have access to. Here is a run-down of what I have: First, there are five UWA commercial videotapes in existence, that I know of, sold by the "La Aficion" newspaper in Mexico City; each highlights one of the lucha libre stars. Each features background and match highlights. There is one on el Villano III, featuring matches against Rambo and The Pegasus Kid from February 1991. There is one on el Hijo del Santo, which is sort of a mini-movie, but does feature matches versus Jose "el Negro" Casas and el Brazo de Oro. There is a third featuring Canek and has highlights of his matches with Kokina, el Gigante Warrior, and The Blue Blazer. A fourth highlights Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, and has matches of him versus Fishman and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada. The final tape features los Mosqueteros del Diablo, los Brazos; they are featured in a variety of six-man tag-team matches. I bought the commercial tapes so any copies you would get from me would be first generation.

UWA TELEVISION SHOWS: Here are all the UWA TV show tapes I have access to as of March 31, 1992:

- * Show broadcast 12/14/91, taped 12/8/91: Transformer (ex-Kendo) and los Cowboys (Silver King and el Texano) versus Fishman, Doctor Wagner junior (King's brother), and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow); Dos Caras and Enrique Vera versus Kokina and el Gigante Warrior; and in the main event, for the UWA World Heavyweight Championship, Canek versus Miguelito Perez junior.
- * Show broadcast 12/21/91, taped 12/15/91: Los Nuevos Misioneros de la Muerte (el Signo, The Black Power II, and Miguel "el Negro" Navarro) versus el Solar I, el Villano I, and el Sicodelico; Rambo and The Head Hunters A and B versus Transformer, Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada, and el Fantasma; and in the main event, Mil Mascaras, Dos Caras, and el Villano III versus Canek, Kokina, and el Samoano I.
- * Show broadcast 1/4/92, taped 12/29/91: Los Nuevos Misioneros de la Muerte (el Signo, The Black Power II, and Miguel "el Negro" Navarro) versus el Sicodelico, el Fantasma, and el Celestial; los Tortugillos Karatekas I, II, III, and IV (Donatelo, Leonardo, Miguel Angel, and Rafael) versus el Scorpio I, el Scorpio junior, el Indomito, and el Engendro; The Head Hunters A and B versus el Villano III and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada; and in the main event, Jose "el Negro" Casas, Fishman, and Rambo versus el Hijo del Santo, Tinieblas I, and el Hijo de Tinieblas (with Alushe).
- * Show broadcast 1/25/92, taped 1/19/92: La Ola Lila (Rudy Reyna, Pimpinela Escarlata, May Flowers, and Casandro) versus Rambo and los Guerreros del Averno (Shu, el Guerrero, el Hijo del Diablo, and el Lobo Rubio); Valente Fernandez, el Engendro, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow) versus Enrique Vera, el Sicodelico, and el Fantasma; Bufalo Allen, Fishman, and el Tigre Canadiense versus los Nuevos Misioneros de la Muerte; and in the main event The Pegasus Kid and Jose "el Negro" Casas versus el Hijo del Santo and el Villano III (****).
- * Show broadcast 2/1/92, taped 1/26/92: The Baby Face I, el Tigre Canadiense, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow) versus las Panteras Rosas (los Villanos I, IV, and V); Fishman, Canek, and Jose "el Negro" Casas versus Dos Caras, el Hijo del Santo, and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada; and the main event, for the WWF World Light Heavyweight Championship, The Pegasus Kid defends versus el Villano III (****).
- * Show broadcast 2/8/92, taped 2/2/92: Kokina, Fishman, and el Gigante Warrior versus el Villano III, Tinieblas I, and el Hijo de Tinieblas (with Alushe, a classic); the main event has Canek versus Dos Caras (****1/4) (UWA Heavy Title).
- * Show broadcast 2/15/92, taped 2/9/92: Fishman, el Samoano I, and el Samoano II versus Silver King, el Texano, and el Fantasma; Dos Caras, Tinieblas I, and el Hijo de Tinieblas (with Alushe) versus Canek, Kokina, and el Gigante Warrior; and in the main event, for the UWA World Junior Heavyweight Championship, Enrique Vera versus The Killer.
- * Show broadcast 2/22/92, taped 2/16/92: The Baby Face I, el Indomito, and el Engendro versus Super Raton, (Super) Pinochio, and el Sicodelico; Enrique Vera, el Fantasma, and el Solar I versus la Muerte, el Espanto junior, and The Killer (managed by Andy Barrow); Jose "el Negro" Casas, Doctor Wagner junior, and el Tigre Canadiense versus Silver King, el Texano, and Haraoki "el Gran" Hamada (****1/4); and in the main event, Canek, Fishman, and Dos Caras versus Bam Bam Bigelow, el Samoano I, and el Samoano II.

I also have access to some of the lucha libre shows from the Universal promotion in Japan. These include some but not all of the shows on the tours of March, June, and November 1990, and shows from March and November of 1991. None of these videos or shows is complete and there isn't always the best quality, but I do have them at my disposal. It would take up a ton of space to go into each match that is featured, but virtually every UWA star except Canek and la Ola Lila (my personal favorites) have made a tour for Universal during this span. Many EMLL stars, such as Fuerza Guerrera, el Hijo del Santo, Erick "el Canelo" Casas, Lizmark, Pedro "el Perro" Aguayo, and others, have made tours as well. If there are specific matches, cards, or stars you have a particular interest in seeing, just let me know. I am sure that between us we can work something out. (For example, I have the highly entertaining match featuring los Brazos that was part of the 1990 All Japan Women's Wrestling Marine Parade, that doesn't really fit with any other tape.) I also have some women's wrestling stars on tape, such as Esther Moreno, Cynthia Moreno, la Diabolica, Mirna Chan, Mari Chan, Kyoko Inoue, and Toshiyo Yamada.

I also have every match in the last two years from New Japan that has featured Jose "el Negro" Casas, The Blue Blazer, The Pegasus Kid, and Katana. I have just a couple of FMW matches with el Amigo Ultra, el Pandita, el Pandita Chiquito, Ultramanito, and Yukihiro Ueno (el Kamikaze Ninja in Tijuana). I am sorry to say I have no SWS footage of Sagon Dragon el Ultimo Dragon (Yoshihiro Asai) with or versus any of the luchadores he has brought in. I do have Mil Mascaras's appearance for W*ING from 12/10/91 at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo.

I also have virtually every Galavision EMLL show from 3/24/90 (the only Galavision match ever that had Mil Mascaras, Dos Caras, and el Sicodelico versus Fabuloso Blondy and The Los Angeles Police I and III) to the current show that just aired this past Sunday, March 29, 1992. I am sure it is not kosher to sell these, but I suppose it is okay to trade them even up, for something I might want.

Now I want to say that I am willing to copy what I have for anyone. I really don't want to make a profit on this, nor do anything illegal. But since so many of you are interested in the tapes I might have, I thought I would let you know what I do have. If you want, you can write or call me and we can set up some sort of an arrangement. I was thinking along the lines of sending me a blank tape, and a stamped return envelope suitable for mailing a tape in...let me know what you think and what you'd be interested in paying (where applicable).

Many of you also have asked about straight Japanese tapes. This doesn't have anything to do with basic lucha libre but for those who are interested I do get All Japan and New Japan's weekly shows about 4-6 days after they air in Japan; so for those of you who wanted to ask about those, feel free to contact me by phone or mail.

Also, if any of you would like to trade with each other or let people know that you have tapes available, please contact me here and I will see that I list your information in the pages here.

ANNUAL INFO

I am still selling copies of the 110 page 1991 lucha libre annual (updated through April 1, 1992) at \$10.00 apiece at the usual address.

JAPAN NEWS

Just a few luchadores in Japan this week. The major news is the revenge of Saigon Dragon el Ultimo Dragon over el Dandy; Dragon won the final three matches of their four-match challenge after being upset in the first match. It turns out that SWS was billing the series between Dragon and Dandy as the battle to determine the number one contender for the NWA World Light Heavyweight Championship held now by Lizmark. Dandy had won the first match via clean pinfall on March 14. On the 16th, in Akita, Dragon came back and pinned Dandy with the "Monkey Magic Special," the german suplex with a continued roll-over into a bridge in 12:15. In a tag-team match on the 18th, in Niigata, Dragon teamed with Naoki Sano (who has had several tours of Mexico) to face Dandy and Goro Tsurumi (who I don't think has ever toured Mexico) in 15:39 when Sano pinned Tsurumi with the belly-to-belly suplex. Then, with the individual series between Dragon and Dandy tied at one match apiece, the two met on March 22 at The Korakuen Hall in Tokyo to determine who would become the number one contender. No surprise--Dragon won again, this time via clean pinfall with the german suplex hold in 12:16. These individual matches, all hard core lucha libre, were said to have been good, but they really got over well with the fans only in Tokyo, the hard-core-fan base. So now Dragon will face Lizmark for the NWA belt on the next SWS tour in April 1992. My guess is that this will be on the April 18th show at the Tokyo Coliseum on the undercard where Ric Flair defends the WWF World Heavyweight belt against Genichiro Tenryu. I heavily expect Dragon to win Lizmark's belt in that match.

Ultraman Dos Mil, who works FMW as el Amigo Ultra, has gotten into a big feud with a new FMW Japanese wrestler who wears a mask as Genghis Khan. On the opening night of the March series, March 20 in Fuyuka, Ultra teamed with Tarzan Goto and Atsushi Onita to defeat Khan, Horace Boulder, and The Big Tyton in a "Mexican Mixed Street Fight Six Man Tag Team Match" (Ultra won). On March 28, in Toda, Khan and Ultra will have a mascara contra mascara match to settle their feud.

NEWS ON THE TRIP(S):

In both 1990 and 1991, I traveled to Mexico City to see lucha libre. Because of the articles that David Meltzer was kind enough to publish in "The Wrestling Observer Newsletter," many of you have become aware of this and have asked me about the possibility of a return trip in 1992. I have even talked informally with some people so as to ascertain which dates would be most appropriate to go. EMLL promoters Francisco "Paco" Alonso and Antonio Pena were directly quoted in "Weekly Gong" magazine as saying that the EMLL's biggest card of 1992 would be the card honoring the 59th anniversary of "the founding of lucha libre." It will be held Friday, September 18, 1992. There is little doubt at least one, if not two, stipulation singles matches will headline that card. I feel strongly that that particular weekend would be the single best weekend to experience Mexico City lucha libre. I know that on every Wednesday night, the EMLL runs a show at the el Cortijo bullring in Mexico City; on Thursdays the UWA runs la Pista Arena Revolucion in Mexico City; on Fridays the EMLL runs la Arena Mexico and the UWA runs suburban la Arena Netzahualcoyotl; Saturdays the EMLL runs la Pista Arena Revolucion; and Sunday there are shows all over the place, with the UWA running el Toreo de Cuatro Caminos for its biggest show of the day and the EMLL running la Arena Mexico. I am suggesting a weekend encompassing each of these nights, arriving Wednesday afternoon and leaving either late Sunday or early Monday. I feel that since to make the trip will be quite an effort for anyone, that to see as much as possible in the shortest amount of time (5+ cards in 96 hours) would seem to me to maximize the effort. Last year, Jody Boyns, who puts out the "New England Wrestling Scene" newsletter in Manchester, N.H., went at the same time I did. Working independently of each other, we each obtained a very similar tour rate and package from a travel agency in our respective home towns. I have little doubt this would be the best way to go for any of you--working locally through a travel agent. I have used travel agents twice and they came through very well twice.

If you do want to go, I suggest working on it now; there seem to be discounts and fairly cheap rates if one books a package one season ahead.

Also, a couple of assorted notes. First, if you do go, I highly recommend that you work on aerobic fitness diligently before you leave. I can not emphasize this highly enough, it is no joke. It is true for several reasons, obvious and hidden. The air in Mexico City in March became the unhealthiest it has ever been, over four times worse than LA's worst. It is unlikely to get better any time soon. Mexico City is nearly 8,000 feet in the air, far higher than any major USA city; even in-shape wrestlers have a tough time working, even indoors, in the thin air. The oxygen your lungs will take in is so thin and dirty, the better shape your lungs and circulation are in, the better.

Another comment is not to plan to rent a car in Mexico City. US auto insurance is invalid there; you can't rent a car without buying relatively expensive Mexican insurance. The only time you are likely to run into trouble with the local police is through driving problems. Mexico City is very compact and served by a super public transportation system. Renting a car is just asking for expensive headaches to follow you around. On a side note, most packages allow transfers to and from the airport. If you do not speak Spanish, you are fairly likely to have difficulty renting a cab when you first arrive. As soon as you exit Terminal E, the international terminal, an American will be absolutely pumpeled upon by cabbies eager to drive you to your hotel. None of them will have the OFFICIAL cab-drivers medallions hanging around their neck; the legal cabbies are outside Terminal A (other end of the airport, 1/4 mile walk). If at all possible, the public transportation is a much better option, but the first time in, not familiar with the area, a legal cab is better than an unlicensed one.

People often talk about the food in Mexico, and the traveler's diarrhea. These problems are actually much less prevalent than you might think in Mexico City. It is a capital and in some ways just another big city. You could easily dine at Shirley's, VIPs, Denny's, McDonald's, KFC, etc., and never have to worry about the food. Even the local-food restaurants are said to be far more sanitary here than in any other Mexican city (Tijuana is supposed to be close). If you do not eat from the sidewalk vendors, and don't drink non-purified water, or pour any drink over ice, things should be fine.

Lastly, everyone interested in the trip has asked me about souvenirs. You could make a real profit by re-selling the masks. The best ones cost 20000 pesos (roughly \$6.66 US) and the more regular ones--which are the ones they wear in the ring--can be had for 10000 pesos. One could easily re-sell them in the US for double or even triple their worth. While you could not pay off an airplane trip, if you bought 20 of the best masks for \$6.66 and sold them in the US for \$20.00--well you can figure out how far \$266+ would go. For my last trip, over four nights, if you subtract the air fare, I didn't spend \$266 total. So there is a way to finance part of the trip...And do you know 10-20 fans or friends who would like to buy these cool masks? The quality on the best ones, as those who have seen some will attest, is outstanding. I believe I can set up a visit to the main Mexico City mask factory, where we MIGHT be able to buy them wholesale rather than retail, which would increase the profit even more. Anyway, my numbers are valid, but whether you want to go in that deep is up to you. One is allowed to bring back US \$400.00 in gifts duty-free. You are allowed to mail stuff back to yourself up to I believe US \$1,000.00 duty free so there is a legal way around the

TRIP NEWS (Continued):

\$400 limit. Plus, there are other souvenirs such as programs, magazines, t-shirts (well, these are supposed to be ready by now), porcelain figurines, little wrestling rings, etc.

While I think I can and should serve as a clearing- and organizing-house for this trip, I strongly suggest each individual interested in going handle his or her own reservations/travel arrangements locally.

Depending on how many people go, we may or may not want to travel to different places as a group. There is a new lucha libre museum that opened this year in suburban Coyoacan; there are some smaller arenas I would love to see wrestling in, like las Arenas Netzahualcoyotl, Naucalpan, and Xochimilco (home of the floating gardens), and el Auditorio Municipal in suburban los Reyes la Paz. There is the mask factory. Fuerza Guerrera, el Espectro junior, Felipe Ham Lee, and others run their own lucha-libre-dominated gyms in Mexico City; the EMLL has an official one at la Arena Mexico. Then, of course, there are possible meetings with wrestlers, promoters, and/or announcers. Whether we all have similar interests or not, there is enough to see wrestling-wise to fill up our spare time. And, of course, there is a ton of stuff to see from "the real world," some quite novel in this socialistic Catholic country.

Now, I already know some of you have said Septmeber is impossible, and that late June, early July, or August would be better. If I can, I will also set up one around these months, but please write me and let me know what would be a good "target week." If anyone wants to go twice, **WARNING** tell the authorities when you enter the country that you will be entering-and-leaving twice within 180 days or else. It's against the law to enter the Distrito Federal more than once every 180 days without prior notice. It is warned in the guide books that the police will find you if you were to try this and then arrest you; I don't know that but I for one would prefer not to take my chances.

I have also been strongly advised more than once to stay out of bars in Mexico City at all costs, and even more especially so if one doesn't speak Spanish. It isn't that I would start something there, but I would have no way to defend myself if a situation arose and I came into contact with the authorities. And, apparently, Yanquis who don't speak English are considered fair "targets" in these places.

Hope you found this interesting. Please, call or write me with any questions or feedback.

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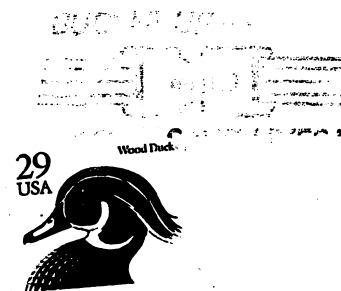
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